

NSC BRIEFING

17 August 1960

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SOVIET MILITARY REALIGNMENT AND FORCE REDUCTIONS

- I. In a major military policy statement last January, Khrushchev described in broad outline a program for a large reduction in manpower and alterations in the structure of the Soviet armed forces.
 - A. Included was a reduction of 1.2 million men, from 3.6 to 2.4 million by the end of 1961.
 - B. The motives were mixed economic, political, and military, including the need for manpower and the belief that obsolescent weapons systems could be pared away and replaced by newer weapons, including missiles.
 - C. We believe this program will substantially be carried out, barring a domestic or international crisis of serious proportions. There have been no signs that the U-2 affair and Summit breakdown have affected the plan.
- II. We have good evidence that extensive realignment and reductions are in fact underway. Some of this activity began well before Khrushchev's January statement.
 - A. Khrushchev announced that a missile command has been set up under Chief Artillery Marshal Nedelin.
 - B. The whole of Naval fighter and naval light bomber aviation is being cut back sharply.
 - C. Tactical Aviation is also being cut back sharply, especially in the Far Eastern, Northern and Baltic areas.

State Department review completed

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- C. The Soviet press has numerous articles about demobilized soldiers, sailors, and airmen entering agriculture and industry, particularly in Kazakhstan and Siberia. One roundup account in late June described the destinations of 220,000 men then said to be on their way to new civilian jobs.
- D. As Marshal Bagramyan has stated privately to an Embassy officer, time is required to arrange housing, vocational training, and employment for those released--especially for officers. Therefore, the largest cuts in numbers of men will probably occur during 1961.
1. Illustrative of their problem is the report of a strike and disorders in Kemerovo, near Novosibirsk, in late May-early June which erupted when new housing was given to 1,500 demobilized military personnel instead of to local workers.

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